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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: MEETING WITH OBASANJO

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter. Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) On October 18, Ambassador Jeter met briefly with President Obasanjo and NSA Mohammed to discuss Obasanjo's upcoming "working visit" to the United States. Obasanjo said the trip would have to be short -- he could not arrive any earlier than the morning of November 2 and had to return to Nigeria by November 4. Former President Mandela had invited Obasanjo to Burundi on November 1. Obasanjo had committed to go before he knew about the Washington date. He stated that he could not now disappoint Mandela. On the back end of his schedule, he had to return home promptly from the U.S. because of the start of his party's national convention.

2. (C) Despite the long flight from Burundi, Obasanjo stated that he would be ready to meet POTUS late in the morning of November 2. Because of his time constraints, Obasanjo will not attend the Corporate Council on Africa's Philadelphia conference; the planned Baltimore speech is apparently also of the boards.

3. (C) However, Obasanjo still is considering a Houston Stop on November 3. In Houston, he would like to see former President Bush and probably like to meet senior executives of oil and oil service companies and visit with a gathering of the Nigerian community in Houston, which likely represents the largest concentration of Nigerians in the U.S. In a pull aside after the meeting, Special Presidential Advisor Adobe Obe told us that the President might also like to pay a visit to Rice University. The Baker institute was also raised, and Adobe asked us to informally approach the Baker Institute to ascertain if they would be interested in receiving the Nigerian President.
Jeter